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Anti-gambling group meets in Jackson

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Recent studies — some by the gambling industry itself — reveal that gambling is even more destructive to society and individuals than previously known, according to psychologists and university professors speaking at the annual conference of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (NCALG) in Jackson, Sept. 24-26.

Keynote speaker Kay Coles James, who chaired the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, told about 200 conference participants she was not prepared for the venom, bigotry, prejudice, and stereotyping she experienced in leading the congressional study commission on the social and economic impact of gambling in America.

James, a senior fellow of Heritage Foundation in Norfolk, Va., said she had endured more bigotry and intolerance as a religious conservative leading the congressional study on gambling than she had as a black woman in corporate America.

James said she never took on the mantle as an advocate against legalized gambling until she had completed her responsibilities as chair of the nine-member study committee appointed by the then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, and President Bill Clinton.

She challenged church, anti-gambling advocates, and religious leaders to study and challenge the moral impact of legal-

ized gambling on America, pointing out that the congressional committee she chaired only dealt with the social and economic impact of gambling.

Weston Ware of Dallas, director of citizenship education for the Baptist General Convention of Texas Christian Life Commission, was elected chairperson of NCALG.

Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, said Mississippi has welcomed both kudzu (a rapidly growing vine which can be used to prevent soil erosion) and casino gambling to Mississippi, and both have pretty much taken over the state.

"We would be a lot better off without either," Futral observed.

Robert Goodman, professor



Kay Cole James

at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, presented an analysis of the final report of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, which was released by James' committee in August.

Goodman said studies show that having a gambling facility within 50 miles roughly doubles problem gambling, and he noted that problems of pathological gamblers are likely to be underestimated.

"Government is engaged in activity which depends on people with behavioral problems," Goodman said, noting that a third of the revenue from casino gambling comes from people with behavioral problems.

National figures show that criminal justice costs alone are about \$5,000 a year per pathological gambler, he said.

University of Illinois professor John Kindt said the crime costs of 1.5 million new pathological gamblers, which governments created from 1994-97, are at least \$15 billion to \$34 billion.

"For every \$1 of benefits, gambling costs \$3," he said, noting that most conservative combined regulatory and crime costs are between \$9,000 and \$11,000 per pathological gambler per year.

Another speaker, Earl Grinols, economics professor at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, said his studies suggest that casino gambling costs about \$150 per adult for every \$39 in social benefits.

He said his studies reveal that one-third and sometimes as much as one-half of casino revenues come from pathological and problem gamblers. Violent crime rates in casino counties begin to rise dramatically about three years after a casino opens in the county, and overall crime rates in counties with casinos are 8% higher than they would be without casinos, he said.

Valorie Lorenz, executive director of the Compulsive Gambling Center in Baltimore, said the scope of problem and pathological gamblers is greater than anyone had thought.

"We can only hope to prevent gambling from expanding, because the numbers of pathological gamblers are growing with the expansion of the gambling industry," said Lorenz, a researcher and therapist for 27 years.

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Miss. CP nears record

Mississippi Baptists made September the second-highest month on record for Cooperative Program giving, tallying \$2,663,701, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, which disburses the funds.

Mississippi giving for the year thus far is \$20,962,269, \$1,244,577, or 6.31%, more than that given for the same period of 1998.

Giving is \$1,006,351, or 5.04%, ahead of the pro rata budget. The pro rata budget is figured by taking gifts given so far and comparing them to monthly budget requirements.

The 1999 Cooperative Program budget is \$26,607,890.

The Deaf Bible Seminar at Camp Garaywa, Oct. 8-10; a one-day mission trip to the Delta on Oct. 12; and expenses for the Mississippi Baptist Convention at First Church, Jackson, Oct. 26-27, are among the many missions emphases supported by Cooperative Program gifts in Mississippi.

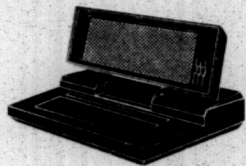
SBC CP posts record

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — For the sixth consecutive year, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ended its fiscal year with record Cooperative Program gifts — nearly \$168 million — surpassing last year's record by more than \$8 million and the yearly budget by nearly \$13 million, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For the SBC's fiscal year, Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, the \$167,996,385 total for 1998-99 is \$8,412,641, or 5.27%, above last year's record of \$159,583,743. The SBC's Cooperative Program Allocation Budget for the year of \$155,005,723 was surpassed by \$12,990,662 or 8.38%.

The increase in total gifts for the sixth year in a row means the remaining \$3.1 million of the SBC's Capital Needs Budget will be paid, finishing a 10-year capital needs budget a year ahead of schedule. All gifts over the regular budget have been distributed 50% to the capital needs budget and 50% according to the regular percentage of the allocation budget.

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Now is not the time to disengage

In less than 30 days, Mississippians will stand at a crossroads — the same crossroads at which all Americans will be standing in a little over a year. In less than 30 days, we will elect the people who will lead us into the world of the 21st century and the third millennium.

As part of this still-young, ever-fascinating experiment in governance called democracy, we have the opportunity to elect the leaders of our republic beginning with the President of the United States of American and working our way down to the most basic local office.

Sadly, the vast majority of the world's people will never get the chance to do so. In many of the countries in which elections of some type are held, people walk for miles, stand in line for hours, and risk their lives to guerrilla attacks just for the privilege of casting their single vote in favor of the candidates of their choice.

The death and destruction undertaken to disrupt recent elections in tiny East Timor off the coast of Australia readily come to mind as a prominent example. Despite the hardships, however, 90% or more of the voting populace in such countries often turns out on election day.

For most Americans and virtually all Mississippians, voting is as easy as strolling into the polls at the nearest fire station on our way to work. Many struggles have been undertaken, and many lives sacrificed, to allow each of us the privilege of voting.

We cannot be denied that right because of who we are, what we look like, from whence we came, or whether we can read the state Constitution and pay a poll tax. The criminal penalties are heavy for anyone who would impede an election or interfere with an individual's right to vote.

Some people would argue that our passion for free and open elections is so great that we have gone overboard in attempting to protect the process. Some people would say that universal suffrage brings with it the danger of

tampering and fraud.

True enough, there are verifiable examples of such problems but until someone comes up with something demonstrably better — and don't hold your breath — we'd best get involved in electing our leaders.

Christians have as much right as any group to be heard in the public square. There are certainly enough of us to make a difference if only we would get in the game.

We should not be intimidated by the scorn of the world brought on by our insistence to be included, and we should not be discouraged by the pusillanimous pleas of some so-called Christian leaders who want to declare defeat and withdraw into the safety of a spiritual cocoon.

Consider the fruits of political disengagement. Right now, because too many of us don't care to make our voices heard at the ballot box, we have a U.S. president who has forced parents of young children all over the country to answer the question, "What is oral sex?"

We have a governor of Mississippi who indulges in profane public threats, vacations in Europe with his girlfriend while his wife stays at home in the Governor's Mansion, and seeks to redefine family values to fit his own feral morality of the moment.

We even have a state Supreme Court jus-

"THEN THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE CONGRESS: 'I WISH WE COULD GET ALONG AS WELL AS CISSY AND HER PAW-PAW DO.'"



tice who games the judicial system he is sworn to uphold in order to dodge a Driving Under the Influence charge.

Are you pleased with that kind of "leadership?" If not, pray that God will raise up a new generation of leaders; study the current crop of candidates (remember, actions speak louder than words); and make up your mind to get involved by voting.

Based on our present situation, the alternative is obviously not very pleasant to consider.

GUEST OPINION:

See you at the wedding (I hope)

By Mona B. Nolf, member
Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa

Marriage is the oldest institution. It was established by God himself.

He took dust from the earth he had created and formed a man out of it. Then he put him to sleep and took one of his ribs and formed a woman. He brought Eve to the man, Adam, and she became his wife.

The Bible makes it plain why God did this. His divine will was (and still is) that a man and a woman be united in marriage until parted by death. They would not only become one flesh, they would also produce offspring to populate the earth — but that was not the only reason for this union.

They were to find fulfillment for all their natural needs and desires. They were to establish a place called home, which is the basic foundation of society.

Statesman Henry Grady once said, "No nation rises higher than its homes." How true that is!

One does not have to be brilliant to know that the breakdown of the home leads to the destruction of society. As marriage goes, so goes the home.

So often the sacredness of marriage is lost to the two people who took the vows. In this

day of many disposable items, some marriages have fallen into this category.

As soon as it gets dirty, it's tossed into the garbage and another one is sought. We see this repeated many times.

The Bible says, "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. 13:4) What does that mean?

It means sex is not permitted outside marriage. I didn't say it — God did. Any violation of that law will be judged by him.

Modern society seems to think (and some people have even said), "We are not bound by these outdated laws. This enlightened generation has freedom of choice to live together without marriage, to have sexual relations with any consenting

adult of the same or opposite sex whether married or single. We can marry and divorce if things don't work out."

No you can't. At least, not without sinning.

God did permit one exception in the law of marriage and divorce. He said, "...except for fornication." (Matt. 5:31-32) In such cases the innocent party would be freed from the marriage covenant.

Do you mean to tell me one has to stay married even if their life is in danger, or they are abused or forsaken? No, God is merciful. He allows the innocent party to break ties with the guilty one, even though it's not his perfect will.

All too often, people are faced with two evils. In such cases they should earnestly

seek God's guidance in choosing the lesser evil. God does want us to live in peace.

The above mentioned sins are not unpardonable. When anyone truly repents of sin and confesses it, God will forgive them and cleanse them so that they are no longer guilty before him (1 John 1:9).

Now that I have written in plain language about God's perfect will for marriage, may I remind you of one other reason it is sacred in his sight?

Marriage is supposed to be the earthly picture of the spiritual union between Christ and his Church (all born-again believers). Why else would he refer to himself as the Bridegroom and his followers as the Bride (Matt. 9:15)?

Why else would God the Father invite us to the wedding supper he is planning for his Son Jesus Christ, the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9)?

Would you like to be part of the Bride of the Son of God? You're invited, but you must prepare for it by receiving Jesus into your heart by your faith in him.

Shall we see you at the wedding — or at the judgment? You decide!

Graham speaks to capacity Harvard crowds

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (BP) — Billy Graham brought a simple message of Christian faith and hope to the intellectuals at Harvard University Sept. 26-27.

Graham spoke before capacity crowds at Memorial Church in the midst of Harvard yard and at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. While in the Boston area, he met privately with religious leaders from Iraq, who invited him to visit their war-ravaged nation.

Graham, 80, was honored by the university with a proclamation as "a preacher of the gospel, a Christian evangelist, and a voice for conscience and commitment," and with enthusiastic standing ovations as he entered and departed the Kennedy School gathering.

It was Graham's third visit to Harvard and his first since 1982. The visit initially had been scheduled last spring, but illness from Parkinson's disease forced the evangelist to cancel. Demonstrating his trademark humor, Graham said Parkinson's "doesn't kill people. It just makes them wish they were dead."

In the lucid and easygoing style that has been his trademark in recent years, Graham spoke Sunday morning at Memorial Church from Galatians 6:14 about the importance of the cross to an audience of some 1,200 students, faculty, and friends, including some who camped out overnight with their sleeping bags to be assured of a seat.

He later told the pastor of Memorial Church that he had just preached "an old-fashioned Southern Baptist sermon." He noted that the cross, the method of Jesus Christ's execution, is seen by many people today as nothing more than an ornament or a piece of "costume jewelry." He added that many people wear a cross without an understanding of its true meaning.

Graham then reflected on his travels to the former Soviet Union and the once-thriving churches that still had a cross on top because the communists did not understand its message and thus did not remove it. He told of a boy who lived near a church and, when once he had lost his way, asked someone to "take me to the cross. I can find my way home from there."

This century's best-known

come to the altar for spiritual counsel, as he does in stadium crusades.

During the 30-minute sermon, Graham mentioned his various illnesses and said that when asked to identify the greatest surprise of his distinguished life he responded by saying it is life's "brevity." He also commented briefly on the role of Christian faith in the sexual fulfillment married couples experience,

explaining that he enjoys such intimacy with his wife, Ruth, who has been hospitalized lately with a broken hip.

An avid golfer, Graham spoke on the final day of the Ryder Cup tournament in nearby Brookline, Mass., just hours before the Americans won the championship, which prompted him to reminisce

about playing on the same Brookline course, "I remember I nearly lost my religion there."

Graham addressed an equally supportive capacity crowd Monday night at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he reminisced about his friendship with the late John F. Kennedy Jr., told the story of how he found Christian faith as a boy in North Carolina and took questions from the audience.

Graham said several years ago Kennedy asked to speak with him about spiritual matters. He also reported that Kennedy and his wife, Carolyn, both of whom died this summer in an airplane crash off Martha's Vineyard, postponed their honeymoon for three days so they could visit with Graham. Kennedy and the evangelist never managed to arrange time for a lengthy discussion about Christ because of

their schedules. Graham told the hushed audience that the missed opportunity has "been one of the great regrets of my life because I loved that young man and I loved his family."

Addressing the topic, "Is God relevant for the 21st century?" Graham said, "I am sure we would be overwhelmed if we could see what the world will be like in 10 or 20 years." After describing a prestigious industry conference he spoke to last year in California, where he learned about upcoming technological marvels, the evangelist returned to the Bible for his inspiration.

Recounting that King David introduced a new technology that revolutionized Israel of his day, the use of iron, Graham likened the significance of that

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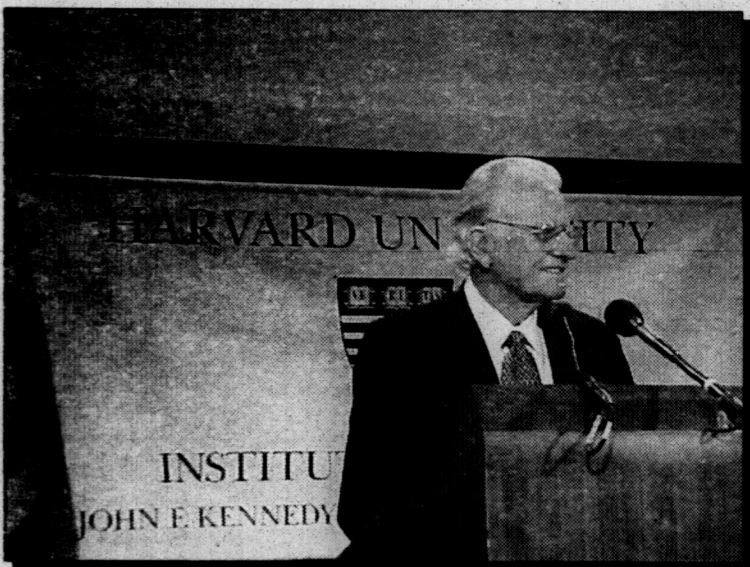
No. 34

Curl elected president of Welsh union

SWANSEA, Wales (BP) — Southern Baptist missionary Bill Curl has been elected president of the English-speaking wing of the Baptist Union of Wales. It is thought to be the first time such an outsider has been elected to the post. Curl and his wife, Lucy Pat, have served as International Mission Board missionaries in Wales since 1991.

Curl was nominated unanimously for the Baptist union's presidency by an association with 16 churches represented. Recently the International Mission Board named Curl "cluster coordinator," directing the work of Southern Baptist missionary personnel serving in the United Kingdom, which includes Wales, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Curl served on the staff of First Church, Orlando, Fla., for 17 years before appointment as a missionary. Wales is considered one of the most needy mission fields in Europe; fewer than 10% of the population is thought to have any significant church ties and few have a personal relationship with Christ.



Graham

evangelist said the Apostle Paul, a scholar who attended "the Harvard of his day," might have found reason for pride in his advanced education, in his Roman citizenship or in his religion, but he chose instead to "glory in the cross" of Jesus Christ. Graham called the repentant criminal who sought forgiveness from Jesus while both hung on crosses "the greatest example of faith in the Bible."

Students today who seek hope for their lives "will never really find an answer until they find it in God," Graham said, noting that the cross of Christ shows people today the depth of sin, the love of God and the only way to find salvation. He defined sin as "breaking the moral law of God. ... We're all guilty. I'm guilty." Graham urged those present to pray silently about developing or enhancing a personal faith, but he did not ask the audience to

BWA plans 100th anniversary

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA), to mark the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2005, has commissioned the writing of a "Centennial History of the Baptist World Alliance." Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, has announced that Richard Pierard, professor of history at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, will be the editor of the centennial history, with Eljee Bentley, of Birmingham, Ala., a retired Southern Baptist historian, and Gerald Borchert, professor of history at Northern Baptist Seminary, Lombard, Ill., serving as associate editors.

Lotz will chair the core committee and Tony Cupit, the BWA's director of study and research, will serve as advisor.

Historians from each of the six regional fellowships of the Baptist World Alliance will be asked to contribute to the book, Lotz said. In addition to the main authors, people from around the world also will be asked to contribute short vignettes to be printed throughout the book, he said.

Publication of the history will coincide with the BWA's Centennial Congress celebrations in July 2005. The BWA is based in McLean, Va.

Looking back

10 years ago

Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines urges executive committee members to settle the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) issue "in a clear-cut, uncomplicated way." Earlier, the committee had acted to cut off financial support and create a new Religious Liberty Commission.

20 years ago

Lawrence Association hosts 71 acteens for a county-wide lock-in at the activities building of Monticello Church. Guest speakers are Becky Briscoe, state acteens consultant, and Tammy Lyon, a student at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College. Denise Windom is associational acteens director.

50 years ago

A total of 2,863 new churches have been organized in the SBC since 1940, according to Porter Routh of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. A total of 933 are classified as being located in the city, 757 are in a town or village, and 1,173 are in the open country.

Nothing stops missions-focused student

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Lisa Redd may be young but she's a volunteer missions veteran, having spent the last two summers as a Baptist Student Union (BSU) summer missionary.

A native of Vicksburg, a member of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg, and a graduate of Warren Central High School in Vicksburg, Redd is a senior at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) majoring in special education and wanting to be involved in early preschool intervention.

She is also actively involved in the BSU at USM, working in the international ministry and with Silent Angels, a sign language ministry.

All of this, while impressive, may not seem so remarkable. However, it takes on new meaning in light of the fact that Redd has been in a wheel chair since she was five years old.

At age four Redd was diagnosed with leukemia. At age five, they discovered back cancer. During that year she went through chemotherapy, radiation treatments, and had surgery on her back.

The cancer was defeated, but Redd was left with no feeling from her knees down and confined to a wheel chair.

Despite this reality, she has a bright outlook on life, a deep desire to help people and serve God, and a positively radiant smile.

"I've never had a point in my life when I have said 'God, why me?' Basically, I have always done what everybody else did, or at least I have tried."

As for summer missions, for Redd it was not a question of whether or not she could

do it. There was, however, the question of accessibility.

Her first summer missions assignment in San Antonio, Tex., was not handicapped accessible but that did not defer Redd.

"It was a children's shelter. We worked with abused and neglected children. There were four of us (summer missionaries) and

That had been five years earlier. At age 13, he would only speak to his sister, who was also at the shelter.

"If you asked him a question he would shake his head yes or no. He would come up to me, tap on my shoulder, and point.

"He would be so excited everyday when I would come to his cottage. He would run get a game, point to it, and ask if I wanted to play it with him."

Her second summer as a BSU missionary was spent at the Baptist Neighborhood Fellowship Center in inner city Albuquerque, N.M.

There, Redd and two other BSU summer missionaries from Mississippi conducted Bible Clubs and other activities with neighborhood children.

"We would hang out with the kids '24-7,'" she said, using youth jargon to describe the 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week demands of the job.

There was one child named Terricia. "When she was saved, she had lots of questions. She wanted a Bible, so we gave her a family children's Bible. Every morning she would come in saying 'Guess what I read!' and then she would start telling us the Bible story she read the night before. It was great."

Redd says that's the way it is on summer missions. "It is the greatest experience in the world, getting to witness to and help other people. On summer missions you really have the opportunity to grow."

For more information on BSU Summer Missions, contact Jerry Merriman or Weaver McCracken at the Student Work Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3299, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651. Email: jmerriman@mbcb.org.



Redd

we each had a designated house where we hung out. We made it work," she said.

While there was an emergency shelter, most of the clients were in long term care. Nineteen of them made professions of faith in Christ that summer.

One particular boy stands out in her mind.

"At age 8 he saw his father sexually abusing his sister. His father shook him and told him to never tell anyone," she recalled.

Groups plan meetings at MBC

A number of groups have announced meetings to be held in conjunction with the 1999 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) on Oct. 26-27 at First Church, Jackson. Among the groups planning to meet are:

October 26

Mississippi College Christian Service Alumni continental breakfast — 7:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall East of First Church, Jackson. Cost: complimentary. Contact: Lance Clay (601) 925-3228

Mid-America Seminary Alumni Association luncheon — 11:45 a.m. at Ramada Inn Coliseum, Jackson. Speaker: Michael R. Spradlin, seminary president. Cost: \$12 per person for buffet meal. Contact: J.B. Hays (662) 345-8597, or e-mail jbhays@clarksdale.com.

New Orleans Seminary Alumni Association luncheon — 12 noon in social hall of Galloway United Methodist Church, Jackson. Speaker: Chuck Kelley, seminary president. Cost: \$14 per person. Reservations deadline: Oct. 11. Contact: Lowell Ingram (601) 825-6145.

William Carey College Alumni Association fellowship — immediately following adjournment of MBC evening session, in Baptist Building chapel. Contact: Donna Wheeler (601) 582-6167.

5,000 Baptist volunteers needed for '00 Olympics

HURST, Texas (BP) — Thousands of athletes and fans will travel to the Olympics next year, worship sports, and return home following Christ, according to leaders of Reach-Out 2000, a ministry to the Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 2000.

About 5,000 Baptists are expected to volunteer for the Olympics ministry, which will begin in June and carry through the Olympic Games themselves, said Sam Mings, executive director of Reach-Out 2000.

The ministry is a joint venture between United States-based Lay Witnesses for Christ International, which Mings leads as president, and the Baptist Union of New South Wales, in the Australian state where the Olympics will be held.

It's part of the Olympics Task Force, a ministry partnership embracing a multinational array of denominations and Christian groups.

Reach-Out 2000 will share the gospel with sports fans from around the world, present the Christian message to secular Australians and strengthen Australian Baptist churches, predicted Phil Skinner, general

superintendent of the Baptist Union of New South Wales, who recently visited the United States.

"We're hoping to reach young people from around the world," Skinner said. "This will be a transnational missions experience."

"Because of the Olympics and the multiculturalness of Australia, there will be a number of nationalities there. People will come [to the Olympics] as unbelievers and return as believers to countries that are closed to the gospel."

The effort is bigger than Baptists, he added.

"This is a kingdom matter — not a Baptist thing, an Anglican thing, or an Episcopal thing — that starts something we desire to see happen," he explained. "We're praying for this to happen."

"We'll use sports as a mechanism to reach people with the gospel. But evangelistic passion and enthusiasm will be reignited and enhanced."

"We will equip people in evangelism. The temperature will go up; the bar for evangelism will go up," he said.

Not only will that atmosphere fuel evangelism, but it also will encourage Australian

churches, Skinner noted.

"It will give the local church a creative opportunity for the gospel to be proclaimed in its community. It will reignite evangelistic flames for some churches and enhance it in others."

Reach-Out 2000 volunteers will serve churches and minister in communities, even in rural areas, across New South Wales, Mings reported.

The ministry will include large rallies, such as "Evening with the Olympians," featuring current Olympic athletes, and "Night of Champions," which also will feature former athletic stars, Mings said.

Multi-gold medalist Carl Lewis, the most decorated Olympic athlete of the century, will present his Christian testimony, even electronically in sites where he cannot attend.

The ministry also will feature sports clinics, beginning several months before the Olympics, if enough qualified volunteers step forward, Skinner said.

Volunteers will branch out from Sydney, a city of more than 4 million people, and also minister in small towns throughout the region.

"Australia is a sports-mad nation," Skinner added, explaining the desire to conduct the sports clinics in as many places as possible. "This is a tool to reach people."

In addition to the sports clinics, volunteers will be involved in hospitality ministry to athletes and fans at the games, as well as providing witness training in Australian churches, where they also will help with worship on Sundays, Mings said.

"We're not looking for people to grab people on the street and hand out the Four Spiritual Laws," Skinner stressed.

"We're looking for people who want to participate in a mission experience. They will go home — to the United States, Japan, Britain, whatever — and be changed."

"It's a two-way street. They will change others, and they will be changed," he pointed out.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate for at least 10 days or more, Mings said.

For more information, contact Mings at Lay Witnesses for Christ, P.O. Box 127, Hurst, TX 76053; phone (817) 284-3594; e-mail lwfc@msn.com.

MBTS interim president addresses students

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Students, faculty, and staff of Midwestern Seminary (MBTS) quietly gathered for a called chapel to hear newly appointed interim president Mike Whitehead apply principles from Proverbs to the previous day's events. Reflecting on crisis experiences from his own life, Whitehead sought to offer biblical principles to guide the seminary community in the wake of the trustee board's decision to fire President Mark Coppenger Sept. 14.

Whitehead, 49, has served as the seminary's vice president for business affairs since the fall of 1995, and was asked by trustees to provide leadership for the seminary during an interim period. The board will meet Oct. 18-19 in its regular session to receive a report on the process for naming a presidential search committee as well as a recommendation for a severance package for Coppenger.

In his introduction, Whitehead made clear that he is not a theologian, but a lawyer, having agreed to what he termed "a battlefield promotion in the course of combat in the war between the cultures and the war that God is engaged in for truth and souls." Acknowledging that "a casualty" had occurred in that war, referring to Coppenger, Whitehead quoted from 2 Samuel 3 as David spoke of Abner's death with the question: "Do you not know that a prince and great man has fallen this day in Israel and I am weak today?"

Whitehead said he was asked by the board of trustees and the Lord "to do this assignment as long as the Lord calls" To further clarify, Whitehead continued, "Mark Coppenger is not dead. A brother has been wounded. There's been a fall and we want to talk about that briefly."

Whitehead prayed for "grace, peace, blessing, and mercy" to be granted by God to Coppenger, recognizing the "emotional shock" the MBTS community is experiencing.

"Bring us to our knees. That's where we need to be," Whitehead expressed confidence Coppenger would again carry out "the vision and passion of his life" to train the next generation to fulfill the Great Commission.

Whitehead assured those gathered he

would act on behalf of the trustees to be sure the Coppenger family was taken care of during the transition at his regular salary until trustees could work out the terms of severance. "So you can put those rumors to rest that there was some sort of haste or rush or a summary eviction from his office. Some of those things that have happened in denominational agencies before will not happen here."

He clarified the action was not "a judgment of this man's life and ministry."

Instead, he characterized it as "an employment decision that the board thought was necessary for the welfare and leadership of this seminary."

Whitehead met with Coppenger the night after the firing, and learned how students and others had already ministered by sharing their concerns. "You keep that up," Whitehead said. "He loves every person in this room and wants to enjoy the bond of Christian fellowship we had and continue to have, but he really needs expressions of love back and forth."

With well over 300 people listening intently to the 45-minute message, Whitehead referenced:

- ◆ Psalm 37 as a passage he and Coppenger had "chewed on" during the trustee investigation;

- ◆ Psalm 22 and 23 as scripture that had ministered to his own life during the tragic death of his father in a power plant accident;

- ◆ Proverbs 3:1-12 to trust in God when his older brother was gunned down in a burglary and to find comfort when he battled thyroid cancer last year.

He offered the Proverbs passage to the seminary community as a context for dealing with issues related they were now facing.

Urging students to memorize scripture as a preparation for future difficulty, Whitehead said, "Don't wait until the crisis to start having your quiet time again. It's too late then. You'd better have some of the Word of God planted to draw on or you're going to wake up disoriented when the phone call comes that some crisis has come to your family."

In such times, Whitehead said Christians will benefit from the instruction in Proverbs to recall God's teaching and commandments while being careful to retain kindness and truth. "There's a lot of unkindness being said about one another in our seminary family," he stated, referring to media reports and anticipated phone calls.

He warned them of "lots of opportunities to say unkind words about our brothers or sisters in Christ" and to take sides. "Men and women in Christian ministry disagree at times, and go separate ways at times. That happens in ministry."

Congratulatory moment

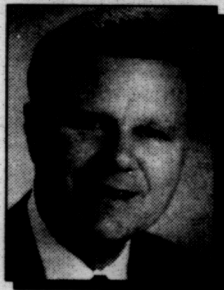


E. Harold Fisher (right), president of Baptist-affiliated Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, congratulates new William Carey College president Larry W. Kennedy during a reception in Kennedy's honor following his Sept. 23 inaugural convocation. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

HUMOR THERAPY

"Humor therapy," or "laughter therapy," or as some have called it, "Joyology," has certainly not been embraced by the medical community as the answer for all the ailments of the human race. Probably the only people who are totally, unquestionably sold on its power are the Humor Therapists. Some studies have shown that this type of therapy does affect blood pressure, it does help with pain management, and some would go so far as to say that it controls the growth of tumors and raises the level of your immune system.

It is of particular interest to those of us who are believers since we recognize that God has spoken to us in his word. Long before there was modern medicine the Lord said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." This kind of medicine is not the result of just hearing the latest joke or responding to some cute quip; it is a condition of the human heart. It is the way we think, the way we trust, the way we look at life, the way we overcome adversities, and the way



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

we embrace the blessings.

Most people go to their physician because they feel bad and just hearing the latest joke taken off the Internet is not likely to change that. Yet, there is something important to be said and understood about God's "humor therapy."

- ◆ God wants us to know joy in life. It is impossible to read the Bible and to listen to Jesus and fail to recognize that he wants us to know joy — not the kind of joy that is just momentary gratification, but genuine confidence in the care of God under all conditions. It is a remarkable insight to see Jesus facing the cross knowing there was joy. The writer of Hebrews, in Chapter 12, tells us that Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was

set before him.

There are tough times we may go through that bring us to joy, but even in the midst of the problems we can find the buoyancy of the delight of God knowing that he loves us.

- ◆ Humor is not a cure for every ailment we may have. God's medicine of a "merry heart" is a powerful thing, but it is not the only medicine that is available to us. Grace, salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation, and spiritual renewal are all a part of God's mighty medical arsenal. If I have a throbbing toothache, I would much rather have a dentist work on me than a comedienne. To the dying thief, Jesus did not give a joke.

- ◆ A bright, optimistic, and happy spirit does make virtual-

ly all of life's painful situations more bearable. My mother was a big talker — she enjoyed people, and laughing, and talking. When she passed away a few years ago the funeral home had made preparations for her burial. My wife Shirley and I went to make sure everything was in order. When we walked into that room for the first time, we stood there at the casket looking at the house in which my mother had lived for almost eighty years and both of us were overcome with grief, loss, and emotion. The silence was broken as Shirley said, "There is something about her mouth that doesn't look right," to which I replied, "I think that it's just the first time we ever saw it closed." Through our tears we laughed together. We were not making fun of her, but we were remembering one of the things that she enjoyed doing so much.

I am convinced that the only true and ultimate humor therapist is not a comedienne, but is God's Christ. He alone can change the way you see the world, yourself, God, and eternity. May the joy of the Lord flood your soul.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



RAs of Evergreen Church, Louisville, recently held their awards ceremony. Each RA received recognition for their accomplishments during the 1998-99 Church Year as well as a certificate. Pictured (from left, front row) are Phillip Johns, Nathan Kelly, Josh Johns, Michael Johns, Phillip Partridge; (back row) Zack Johns, Robert Johns, Brian Partridge, Phillip Foster, Hardy Joiner, Trey McDill, and Shannon Cole, teacher. Not pictured is Chris Childs, teacher.

GAs and Mission Friends of Lake Harbor Church, Rankin Association, recently held its coronation. The girls shared scripture verses they had learned and presented a program, "Witnessing for Jesus." Pictured (from left) are Joy Rachel, director; Crystal Phillips;

Ashton Phillips; Kathryn Malone; Sara Malone; Sandra Davis; and Christina Wilson. Cliff Davis is pastor.



GAs and Mission Friends of Lake Harbor Church

Marriage Enrichment Conference, sponsored by the North Delta Association, will be held Oct. 15-16 at Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale. Speakers for the conference will be Charles "Chuck" Kelley Jr., president of New Orleans Seminary, and his

wife Rhonda. Banquet will be held Oct. 15 at 6:30 p.m. followed by Challenges from the Kelleys.

Trace Pointe, Baptist Health Systems' new retirement and assisted living community in Clinton, is scheduled to open in November. Five types of units, including 1- and 2-bedroom plans, are available in Phase 1, which includes Assisted Living, Independent Living, Adult Day Health Services, and a medical clinic. Adult Day Health Services, which will open in October, provides unique programs for adults with Alzheimer's Disease and other types of dementia, as well as access to transportation, health care, meals, and activities. Pictured are Shane Humphries (left), from Baptist Adult Day Health Services and Brady Stewart, from Trace Pointe Assisted Living. For information about Trace Pointe, call the Baptist Health Line at 1-800-948-6262.

The Pontotoc Church Staff Golf Classic will be held at the Pontotoc Country Club, Oct. 18. Tee time will be at 8:30 a.m. If you need further information call (662) 489-6361, 489-7534, or 489-4958.



Kokomo Church, Marion Association

Kokomo Church, Marion Association, held ground breaking ceremonies for its new church building on Aug. 8. Pictured (from left) are John Boyles, Jack Holmes, Arnold Fairburn, deacons; and Glenn Nace, pastor.

Baptist Health Systems will hold a seminar entitled "Breast Cancer: Reducing your Risk." This seminar will be led by Gerry Ann Houston, M.D., Jackson oncologist who serves as medical director of Baptist's Comprehensive Breast Center. The seminar will cover a variety of topics, including understanding your risk factors, ways to improve your odds, and methods for early detection. The

free seminar will be held at 6 p.m. on Oct. 26 at Baptist Women's Center, 1405 N. State Street, Jackson. To register, or for more information, call 948-6262 or 1-800-948-6262. Space is limited, so early registration is requested.



Humphries and Stewart

STAFF CHANGES

Chesterville Church, Tupelo, has called **Harold K. Russell** as pastor effective Sept. 12. Russell is a third year student at Blue Mountain College and goes to Chesterville Church from Troy Church, Tupelo, his home church. He previously served at Skyline Church, Tupelo, from 1995-1998.



Russell

Mount Vernon, Meridian, has called **Scott Culpepper** as pastor. A native of Louisiana, Culpepper received his education at Louisiana College and New Orleans Seminary.

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Shady Grove Church, Bogue Chitto, held ground breaking ceremony on Aug. 29 for a new sanctuary. Building committee and deacons (pictured from left) are Bobby Nelson; Delton Moak; Carolyn Welch; Katherine Rawls; Kirk Allen; Beverly Moak; Herman Moak; Greg Forbus, pastor; Oscar Cole; Devon Guy; James Hux; Pete Rawls; and Franklin Moak.

ATTENTION NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ALUMNI!

The Mississippi Chapter of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Association will meet Tuesday, October 26 at Galloway United Methodist Church at noon. The cost is \$14 per person, and the deadline for receiving reservations is October 11.

Please mail reservations to Rev. Lowell Ingram, Cato Baptist Church, 1122 Cato Road, Mendenhall, MS 39114.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of Enterprise Church, Enterprise

Enterprise Church, held its Recognition Service on Aug. 22. GAs pictured (front row, from left) are Kristina Moore, Carmen Speed, Abby Lee, and Andi Katherine Kersh; (back row) Megan Kidd, Madison Gartman, Laura Speed, and Georgia Belvin. Acteens are Sara Kay Hamburg, Jennifer Kersh, Amy Little, and Lisa Cothern.



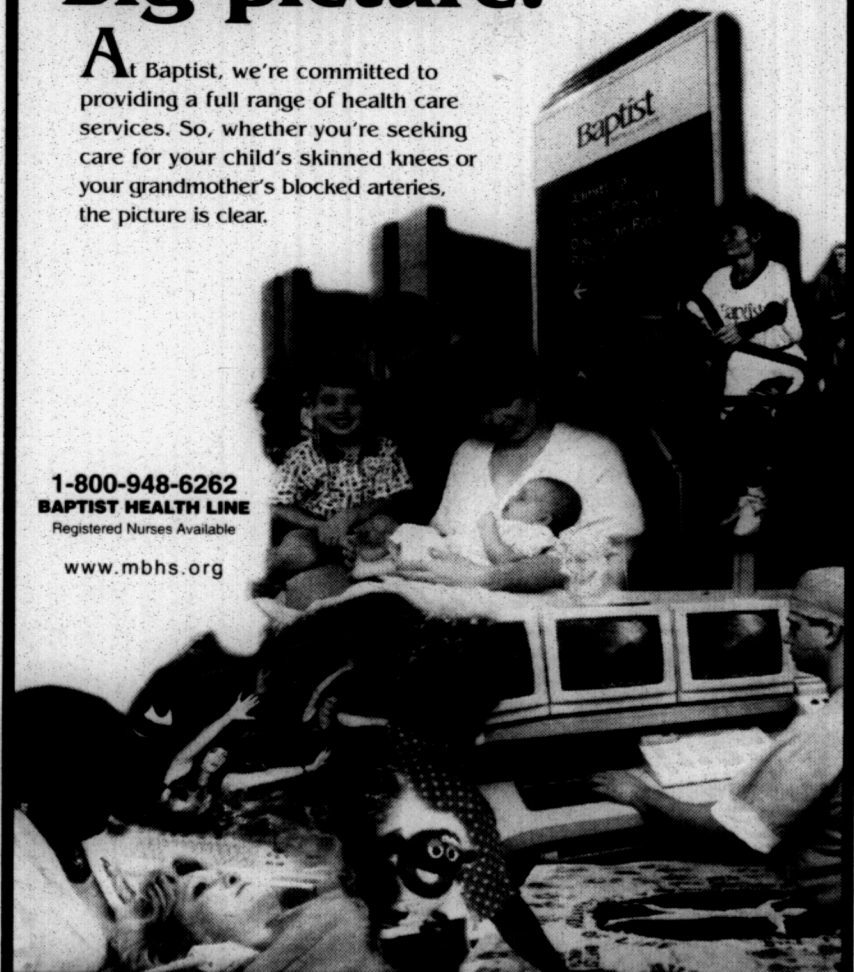
Acteens of Enterprise Church, Enterprise

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GAs of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg, participated in the annual Walk for Life and raised \$1,036 for Vicksburg Center for Pregnancy Choices. They delivered 12 grocery sacks of school supplies to the Baptist Children's Village, Jackson, for the Christmas in August project. Pictured (bottom row, from left) are Kimberly Stagg, Bethany Monk, Kelli Shaw, Kaylee Boyd, and Claire Ray; (middle row) Jessica Goodson, Amy Goodson, Kayla Riggs, Sallie Ray, and Rachel Adcock; (top row) Natalie Monk, Samantha McCool, Alisha Massey, and Lauren Windham. Leaders are Cathy Gordon and Joy Thomas. Billy Brumfield is pastor.



GAs of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg



Youth group of Fifteenth Avenue Church, Meridian

The youth group of **Fifteenth Avenue Church, Meridian,** recently attended Centrifuge at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn. Those attending (pictured from left, front row) were Gary Smith, Britney Peek, Robin Shehane, Daniel Watkins, Baleigh Barham, Austin Posey, Ben Roberts, and Chad Polk, minister to students; (second row) Kristopher Jones, Diana Bird, Mary Frances McDonnell, Michael Tartt, Brandi Knotts, Jessica Lockridge, Toni Grayson, and Paige Polk; (top row) Lesley Smith, Jennifer Gregory, Jay Crane, Jay Grayson, Leigh Ann Rose, Sarah Tartt, Chris Thompson, Michael Seto, and Wade Ethridge. This year's Centrifuge curriculum, Whatever...You Gotta, Gotta

Love, was written by Diana Bird, wife of Jason Bird, pastor.

Ground breaking services were recently held at Crooked Creek Church, Silver Creek, to enlarge the fellowship hall. Pictured are Robert Dunn, pastor, and the men holding the shovels are part of the building committee. They are (front row) Mike Newsom, Wayne Byrd, John Blair, Billy Jenkins, B. H. Stephens, Billy Rae Jenkins, Mike Daughdrill, and Larry Davis.



Ground breaking at Crooked Creek Church, Silver Creek

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Music Festival location changed

The Area 5 Keyboard festival will be held at Crossgates Church, Brandon, on Thursday, January 27, 2000 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The location was previously listed as First Church, Brandon.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Jean Allgood of Gulfport was recently elected secretary for the National BookLink. BookLink is a volunteer ministry of the National Fellowship of Baptist Educators, an arm of the North American Mission Board, and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I have been president of Mississippi Baptists Educators for two years. We have as our main work the BookLink effort. We have, for 2 or 3 years now, had a project of communication between Chinese and American students," writes Allgood. For

more information about BookLink, contact the Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or call Jim Didlake, director, at (601) 292-3334.

Wayne Miley was honored at Midway Church, Newton, on Sept. 26. He was presented a book of memories, a plaque, and a monetary gift. Miley has served the church as a bivocational pastor since January of 1992. He is currently employed

at the Mississippi Employment Security Commission in Jackson. Miley is available for pulpit supply, interim pastorates, or a pastoral ministry. Correspondence may be forwarded to 6811 Old Canton Road, Ridgeland, MS 39157 or call (601) 961-7475 or 956-6430.



Doug Tullos and Mike Sistrunk were recently ordained as deacons at Pelahatchie Church, Pelahatchie. Mike Glenn is pastor.



Trent Bell was licensed to the ministry on Aug. 15 at First Church, Terry. He plans to attend New Orleans Seminary Extension at Broadmoor Church, Jackson. Bell, whose goal is to be a youth minister, has served as a volunteer in the youth department of First Church for eight years. Pictured (from left) are John Pace Jr. and Bell.

HOMECOMINGS

New Hope, Foxworth: Oct. 10; services, 11 a.m.; covered dish, and 7 p.m.; Billy Williams, Gautier, guest speaker; Bradley White, New Orleans, guest singer; Kent Campbell, pastor.

Roseland Park, Picayune: Oct. 9-10; Sat., reception from 4-7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. and dinner on the grounds at noon.

Clear Branch, Florence: Oct. 10; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner following services; 1:30 p.m., singing featuring local talent; Tim McCaffrey, guest speaker; Robby Britt, pastor.

Hickory Ridge, Florence: 100th anniversary; Oct. 10; Centennial Celebration from 10 a.m. until noon; dinner on the grounds; Dale Holloway, pastor.

Chunky, Chunky: Oct. 17; 34th anniversary; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch will be served in family life building; 1:45 p.m. program; Wayne Campbell, pastor.

Damascus, Flora: Oct. 10; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall; Sonny Bradshaw, pastor, speaker.

Pleasant Valley (Simpson): 90th anniversary; Oct. 15-17; Friday, 7 p.m. fish fry; Saturday, concert by the Chalks, 6 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; lunch served at noon; Earl Clark, pastor.

Shelton, Moselle: Oct. 10; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds with afternoon ser-

vices to follow; Ronald Bishop, former interim pastor, speaker; Lane Bryant, music.

Holly Springs, Foxworth: Oct. 10; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall, 12:30 p.m.; singing at 1:30 p.m.; Varion Stogner, former pastor, guest speaker; William E. James, pastor.

Mount Pisgah, Enid: Oct. 10; 10 a.m., New Wine, Hebron, musical guest; 11 a.m. service, Ken Pegram, former pastor, speaker; noon meal; 1:30 p.m., New Wine; Marty Evans, pastor.

Pine Grove, Hickory Flat: Oct. 10; Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Neil Gant, former pastor, speaker; Servants Quartet from Ripley will be guest singers following lunch.

REVIVAL DATES

Harmony, Picayune: Oct. 7-10; Thurs.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Scott Cappleman, Picayune, evangelist; Brad Arnett, pastor.

Shiloh, Oxford: Oct. 17-20; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Clarence Cooper, Grenada, evangelist; Blake Krumalis, Southaven, music; David Thomas, pastor.

Cedar Grove (Marion): Oct. 10-13; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch served, and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, Brandon, evangelist; Hubert Greer, Wesson, music; Robert E. Jones, interim pastor.

Glading (Amite): Oct. 8-10; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; regular Sunday morning services; dinner on the grounds followed by an afternoon service; Eric Hankins, Gillsburg, evangelist; Curtis Bishop, music; Charles Kirkfield, pastor.

Old Union, Shannon: Oct. 10-14; Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Ronnie Owens, evangelist; Andy Russell, music; Kenneth Kelly, pastor.

Vision, Petal: Oct. 10-13; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Michael Mason, Alabama, evangelist; Jonathan McKenzie, music; Jimmy Clark, pastor.

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MINISTER OF WORSHIP - Glasgow Baptist Church is seeking a Minister of Worship, 400 worship attendance in two worship services. \$40,000 - \$45,000 package range depending on qualifications. The successful candidate has strong musical skills, broad experiences in worship and is currently part of a vital ministry. Send resume to: Worship Search Committee, Glasgow Baptist Church, P.O. Box 489, Glasgow, KY 42142; www.glasgowbaptist.com.

FLORIDA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME — Tallahassee needs a husband-wife team to be primary residential staff for the girls home. Excellent salary/benefits. Work for 2 weeks on duty, 1 week off. Come minister in the lives of children! Call Pam at 1-850-878-1458.

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GROUPS - CALL KELLER'S COUNTRY DORM RESORT, Eureka Springs, Ark, for front seats at The Great Passion Play, plus lodging, recreation, and meals, all for just \$35.00 each! Free information - 501-253-8418.

PARADISE LANES: Mississippi's only smoke and alcohol free Bowling Center. Call about Lock-ins, group rates, fund raisers, and leagues. Located at 820 Cooper Road, Jackson, MS, (601) 372-7700.

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CHURCH IS SEEKING a person to fill the full-time position of Director of Administration. Send resume to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 701 South Main Street, Jonesboro, AR 72401.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED. Business credentials with experience in administration and management. Mindset and heart of a minister. Send resume: Search Committee, Green Valley Baptist Church, 1815 Patton Chapel Road, Birmingham, AL 35226.

FOR SALE: 1993 Metrotrams Mini-Bus, 25 passenger - Rear and front A/C - Ford 460 EFT Engine, \$25,000 - Mileage 90,000. Phone 601-763-7571.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION WANTED. Seminary degree required from an SBC school. Must have at least 5 years experience in a large or growing church. Send resume along with photo. Include present job description and data on numerical growth at present church. Salary and benefits are excellent. Church averages more than 300 baptisms per year with incredible growth potential. Please send to Christy Murphy, Cascade Hills Baptist Church, 727 54th Street, Columbus, GA 31904.

FOR SALE: 1987 Dodge van, 15 passenger, automatic transmission, AC, 360 V8, 67,200 miles, \$4,500; and 1987 Ford bus, 24 passenger, automatic transmission, dual air, 460 V8, 81,000 miles, \$6,500. If interested, call First Church, Long Beach at 228-864-2584.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH of Tuscaloosa, Alabama is currently seeking a Minister of Preschool/Children to lead a fully developed children's ministry. Calvary is located adjacent to the University of Alabama. Seminary degree is preferred. Experience is preferred. Send resume to Preschool/Children Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 1121 Paul W. Bryant Drive, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401. (205) 758-0495 for more information.

ALUMNI GROUP FORMED

Editor,

The Jones County Junior College (JCJC) Baptist Student Union (BSU) has a rich heritage of ministry in South Mississippi and around the world. Because so many JCJC students in the past have been so greatly influenced by the Jones BSU, a committee of former BSU members is working to form an alumni association to provide assistance and encouragement to current and future BSU members. A reunion is planned for all former BSU members on Nov. 6. This reunion will be a great way of catching up on the lives of former classmates. It will also provide a min-

istry opportunity by assisting many students now and in the future in numerous ways.

If you were involved with the JCJC BSU while a student at Jones or know someone who was, please contact the BSU at Jones: phone (601) 477-3973, e-mail jcjcbsu@juno.com, or mail to JCJC BSU, Ellisville, MS 39437. JCJC BSU Reunion Comm. Laurel

IMB NOT CHEATED

Editor,

I am responding to a letter published in the September 16 issue that commented on the proposed 2000 budget which

allocated \$16,326 more to the three Baptist colleges in the state than to the International Mission Board (IMB). The author of the letter felt this budget reflected wrong priorities of Mississippi Baptists, and the convention was more interested in higher education than international missions.

I do not agree with the argument made in the letter. I have served the IMB as a volunteer on two occasions and have close family members serving as career missionaries.

As a student at Mississippi College (MC), I see first hand what kinds of things are being taught in our Baptist institutions. Graduates of MC are being sent out into the world as

Christian servants. Many are pastors and church leaders, and other are Christian businesspeople and valuable lay persons in local churches.

In my opinion, giving more money to Baptist colleges does not cheat IMB in any way. Instead, it prepares students for service right now and in the future. Certainly one does not need a college degree to be used of God, nor does everyone called to service come from a Baptist school, but giving to Baptist schools is an investment that will reap great benefits as graduates go into the world prepared and willing to be used by God.

Leah Dedeaux
Jackson



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College is offering the second part of a four-week course designed to help individuals plan for Personal Investment. The second session, Basics of

Bonds, is scheduled to begin Oct. 14, meeting Thursday from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, call (601) 925-3301.

William Carey College Fall Preview Day 1999 will be held

Oct. 16 on the Hattiesburg campus. Preview Day offers high school and transfer students the opportunity to tour the campus and dormitories, meet faculty, receive scholarship and financial aid information, and meet student organization representatives. Registration will be held in the Thomas Business Building at 9 a.m. Panel discussions begin at 9:30 a.m. and topics will include admissions, academic programs, residence life, student activities, and student support services. Faculty advisement for students will be held at 10:15 a.m. with a financial aid seminar for parents running concurrently. For more information, contact the Admission Office at 1-800-962-5991 ext. 103 or 582-6103.

David Miller, associate professor of English at Mississippi College, has recently received two awards for outstanding service to both his university and his academic discipline. He was chosen by his colleagues as the

1999 Distinguished Lecturer in the College of Arts and Science, and President Howell W. Todd has also named him as the Humanities Professor of the Year at Mississippi College. Miller's lecture entitled "In the Midst of Our Life's Journey: How the Epic Narrative Holds Our Lives Together" will be presented on Oct. 11 at 7 p.m. in Provine Chapel.



Miller

Mississippi College (MC) music professor James Sclater of Clinton has, again, received the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) Award for the 1999-2000 school year, making this the ninth consecutive year Sclater has won this award. These cash awards, made by the ASCAP reflect a continuing commitment to assist and encourage writers of serious music. They are granted by an independent panel and are based upon the unique prestige value of each writer's catalog of original compositions as well as recent performances of those works. Sclater has been a member of the MC faculty since 1970.

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PIANIST NEEDED. Send resume to Stephen Bufkin, Griffith Memorial Baptist Church, 5275 Terry Road, Jackson, MS 39212 or fax 601-372-3010.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH - Send resume to: Richburg Baptist Church, c/o Youth Committee, 72 Sandy Run Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resume to Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 179, Charleston, MS 38921. Call 662-647-5558.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH and/or music for rural church. Send resumes to: Attn: Brian Burge, Rolling Hills Baptist Church, 1386 McNeil Steep Hollow Rd., Carriere, MS 39426.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Montrose Baptist Church, Jasper County. For more information, call 787-3194.

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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Holiness in choices

Lev. 26:1-27:34

By Sylvia Fleming

Webster's dictionary defines the word "if" as meaning "on condition that." Then, Amy Carmichael in her small book "If" sets forth certain conditions, declaring that if she could not meet them, she knew "nothing of Calvary love." Well, Webster and Carmichael were not the only two famous authors who used the oxymoron, "the biggest little word" in the English language. God used the very same word when he set forth conditions for the Israelites. To receive their abundant blessings as promised in the Palestinian Covenant, they must obey.

God made his blessings dependent upon the Israelites'

obedience. Because they chose repeatedly to disobey they have never been able to claim their full benefit of the Promised Land. God promised Abraham a specific area of land with specific boundaries for his seed (Genesis 15:18-21). They will always hold the title deed to the Land because there were no conditions attached when God made the Covenant with Abraham. However, when the Palestinian Covenant was made it gave the conditions by which Israel could both enter into and also dwell in their Promised Land, as well as receive blessings. They must obey to be blessed.

God told the Israelites over and over to repent and he



Fleming

would bless them. After having used every positive prompt possible, God then used a negative approach.

God in essence told them, "If you don't listen to me, I will..." and he began listing all means of punishment that he was going to use. If they did not repent,

God's punishment would include consumption—a terrible flesh-consuming disease (Adam Clark). God would punish them physically, with both acute and chronic diseases, as well as mentally with terror.

The key to the blessings God would bestow upon Israel were the same as they are today—obedience. Their means of returning to God was to "confess their iniquity," "be humble," and "accept...the punishment" (Leviticus 26:40-41). So to accept their guilt and shame, be remorseful, and submit to God's

justice was and is their hope.

That hope is still future. However, one day there will be a new covenant for the nation of Israel, and it will be totally dependent upon God and not on his children's obedience. The new covenant will be solely based upon mercy and grace for the Israelites. Just as the New Testament broke the bondage of the law for the Church, bringing mercy and grace for all in that body, so will the New Covenant for the Jews.

In Romans eleven, Paul documents the fact that there is a future hope for Israel: a remnant remains. "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew..." (Romans 11:2). With the Jewish unbelief came a marvelous opportunity for the Gentile people. They, along with all who believe in the Only Son of God, made up the Church, the body of Christ. One day soon the Israelites as a nation will recognize their

Messiah and they will confess, be humbled, and accept their punishment.

With God's goodness, grace, and his mercy, he provided a means for the Israelites through their free will to pay for the air they breathed, as well as the other blessings God provided. That provision is through the tithe. Not only the Jews, but also all who love God can demonstrate their love and dependence on him by tithing. A tithe is the kindergarten in the school of obedience and the demonstration of love for God. He expected tithe of land, seed, fruit, herd, and flock. A tenth of any and all was to be paid. If tithes were held back, God even set up a means and an amount for restitution.

God does not force anyone to obey him, but what a blessing we deny ourselves when we refuse.

Fleming is a member of Bond Church, Neshoba Association.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Missed opportunity

Numbers 13:1-3, 32-14:4, 20-24

By Jerry L. Smith

Have you ever been so close to something that you could "taste" it? In this week's lesson, we find the Israelites so close to the Promised Land that they could taste it. But, if it's true what country singer George Jones has observed, that "we live and die by the choices we make," then the Israelites were about to make a choice that would keep the coroner busy for 40 years!

Instead of trusting God and seizing their future, they gave in to fear and sealed their fate. Their mouth-watering opportunity was about to taste as sweet as a lemon!

Exploring an opportunity (13:1-3). In sports, when a team

doesn't show up to play, they forfeit the game. Well, even though all the Israelites were present and accounted for, they chose, instead, to forfeit their opportunity of claiming their inheritance in Canaan. When they should have been exercising their faith, they were capitulating to fear. Instead of advancing and conquering their foes, they retreated and compromised their faith. God had assured them of victory, but they doubted the veracity of his word.

How many times have you allowed spiritual cowardice to overshadow an opportunity? How often has the root of fear blossomed onto paralysis?

God presents us with



Smith

numerous opportunities to exercise our faith. He provides those opportunities as a test of our obedience. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that "without faith, it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6) Is your faith pleasing to God?

Are you pleasing him by seizing an evangelistic opportunity? Are you pleasing him by sacrificing your pride by seeking reconciliation in a troubled relationship? Do you have more "forfeits" than wins or losses? Then decide right now that the next opportunity that God presents, you're going to step out on faith and trust him.

Rejecting an opportunity (13:32-14:4). The Israelites rejected the opportunity to take possession of the Promised Land because they were intimidated by the majority report of the 12 spies. Out of the 12 spies that surveyed the land of

Canaan, ten believed that the Israelites were no match against their enemies, but two (Joshua & Caleb) believed that their enemies were no match for God! Ten of the spies were pessimists.

I've heard that a pessimist is somebody that is always seasick on the voyage of life. I've also heard that when two pessimists meet, instead of shaking hands, they just shake their heads.

It's easy to miss opportunities when you listen to the naysayers. They are the ones that never figure the God-factor into any equation.

You'll never succeed if you never try. Thomas Edison failed 8,000 times before he successfully invented the light bulb.

Don't let the naysayers cause you to miss a God-sized opportunity. With spirit-filled courage, you can dilute their influence by watering-down their negativism. Don't forget that you and God constitute a majority!

Missing an opportunity

(14:20-24). Because the Israelites decided not to trust the Lord and take the land, they missed God's best for them. God presented them with an opportunity and they missed it.

Others have missed great opportunities—Sandra Bullock turned down the lead role in "Pretty Woman," Gary Cooper, in turning down "Gone With the Wind," said, "I'm just glad that it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not Gary Cooper," a Decca Recording Company official rejected the Beatles in 1962 by saying, "We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."

Are you missing out on an opportunity because you are afraid? Intimidated? Prone to listen to critics?

After considering this week's lesson, determine that from now on, you are going to become a person of faith!

Smith is pastor of First Church, Summit.

LIFE AND WORK

Experiencing spiritual breakthrough in marriage

Gen. 2:18, 20-22; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-33

By Tom Atwood

God has created and ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Consequently, marriage is a critically essential issue. Our generation is witnessing massive marital distortion, disruption, and destruction. The "me" generation is not faring well in the marital relationship because it requires selfless servanthood and loving sacrifice.

Does God have a word about this vital issue? The answer is "Yes!" God's word speaks profoundly of the design, purpose, and the experience of marriage. It is the operations manual of effective family life.

Marriage compromise (Matt. 19:3, 7-9). When the

Pharisees asked Jesus if a man could divorce his wife and, if so, on what grounds, he replied with characteristic wisdom. Jesus' response was to appeal to the design of God's creation. The Pharisees were appealing to the law but Jesus takes them farther back, to the Garden of Eden. Before man's failure and fall, the man and the woman lived the paradigm to which Jesus referred. The law that came through Moses and its divorce provisions, were, as Jesus said, because of the hardness of the heart.

The Pharisees' view of mar-



Atwood

riage and divorce was lacking because it was based on a fallen and failed model. The goal of marriages must be in the pristine purity, wholeness, and unity that existed in pre-sin Eden. They presented a compromised view of marriage.

Believers live in a world which is driven by the ideal but shaped by that which is less than ideal. Sin exists and sin-stained and sin-stunted relationships are the universal experience. Marriage relationships are tested at every point. Marital infidelity (v. 9) and abandonment (1 Cor. 7:15) are revealed as reasons for divorce but being simply justified does not mean that it is required. One must uphold the ideal Biblical view and deal with the ugly realities. Real spiritual breakthrough is needed to preserve the health and well being of families. Jesus Christ really is the answer.

Marriage commitment (Matt. 19:4-6). Jesus obviously

confirms that God's created intent for marriage was a permanent union between one man and one woman for a lifetime. A commitment to God's design is critical for those who seek to live in fellowship with God. Both married and single adults need to make a life commitment to God's design for marriage. Marriages that are begun or built upon any other commitment will be severely tested. Anything less is a fragile and frail foundation that has little likelihood of survival in our selfish and secular culture.

Marriage conduct (Gen. 2:18, 20b-22; Eph. 5:22-25, 28, 33). A good marriage requires the very best from both a husband and a wife in conforming to God's design. Though they have differing functions and responsibilities they share in the need to submit to God's will as revealed in scripture.

When woman was created (Gen. 2:18-22) she was formed as a "helper" suitable for Adam. Some have misunderstood this

idea to provide grounds for treating women as inferiors or even worse demeaning behavior. The writer of Genesis, perhaps Moses, never had that intent. Eve is created in God's image just as Adam and thus shares the same quality of existence. Some suggest that the word "suitable" confirms likeness or similarity. Though different in role and function the woman is every bit the equal of the man.

Modern secularists reject God's design but it nevertheless exists, not for the creature's critique, but for his conformity. Paul uses two analogies to describe how husbands are to love their wives: (1) as Christ loved the church, selflessly and sacrificially; and (2) as a person who loves his own body, nurturing, providing for, and protecting it. Wives are to respond to their husband's loving leadership with the same submissiveness with which the church submits to Christ.

Atwood is pastor of First Church, Oxford.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST 1-31, 1999 MEMORIALS

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Kelley & Brandy Kelley
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Kleinpeter
Bill & Doris Stanley

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Mr. & Mrs. H. C. Newman

Johnny Smith
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Mr. Grady Smith
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Mr. Paul Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Wallace A. Clay
Ms. Polly Frazier
Paul & Pam Lovelace

Mrs. Karen Farmer Spitchley
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Mary Anne Stewart
Mr. & Mrs. C. G. Cryder

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Chuck & Courtney Owens
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John, June & Lillian Watkins

Terrel Tucker
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Maudie Vanlandingham
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Mrs. Gracie Weeks
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Mr. & Mrs. C. G. Cryder

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Mr. Harold Worsham
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Gleaners Class, Pilgrims Rest BC

Mrs. Roland Anest
Winsome SS Class-Calvary BC, Tupelo

Patrick Ard
Mr. & Mrs. Everett Stafford

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Mr. & Mrs. Everett Stafford

Mrs. Ellis Rich
Mrs. Malcolm W. Heard

Dr. & Mrs. C. L. Stevenson
Mr. & Mrs. Otis T. Marshall Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie Whitten
Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Kemp

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Mrs. Tina Ginn

Mr. L. L. Adair
Ms. Nelda M. Pickle

Ralph Adams
Mr. & Mrs. Howard C. McDonald

Robert Nelson Alford
Ms. Hope H. Hawkins

Bill Allison
Trinity BC, Vicksburg

Mrs. Dudley Andrews
Steve, Vicki, Neal & Kimberly Bozeman

Mrs. Dorothy (Dot) Armstrong
Mrs. Lera Walters

Mrs. Pearl Baggett
Mr. & Mrs. William Defenbaugh
Graeber Brothers Inc.



Mount Zion Baptist Church in Magee hosted a "Fun Day" at the India Nunnery campus. They cooked hot dogs and had pony rides, a space walk, and lots of games for all of the residents.



Mrs. Minnie Bailey
Mr. & Mrs. Freddie L. Jones

Milan Baker
Mr. & Mrs. Philip H. West, Jr.

Mrs. Mamie Lee Baker
Ms. Ruth Land

Olen Baker
Mrs. Rachel C. Browning

Marianne S. Bankston
Mr. & Mrs. G. M. Anglin

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Dr. & Mrs. Ben Barrett
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Dr. Ann Myers
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Ms. Annie Laurie Thornton
Gerry & Ann Lauman



Nichole of the Reedy Acres campus in Water Valley welcomed some new ducklings to the lake.

Wedgwood youth pen memorials on floor

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — They wrote to God. They wrote to friends who had been killed or wounded. They wrote to the killer. They even wrote to Satan.

In an act that was part memorial, part ministry, and part therapy, many of the young people who had been in Wedgwood Church's sanctuary the night Larry Ashbrook opened fire wrote messages of

hope, forgiveness, and love on the once carpet-covered concrete floors Sept. 21. Throughout the next day and night, others from the church wrote their messages.

Some, like the widow of Shawn Brown, used Scripture.

"I am my beloved, and my beloved is mine," Kathy Brown wrote, quoting Solomon 6:3.

Some captured their feelings as they watched their friends die.

"I saw your eyes, they were open. I looked at your body, I couldn't help. We will miss you for awhile. Save a spot for the Wedgies," MCS wrote to Cassandra Griffin. ("Wedgies" is the nickname members of Wedgwood Church have given to themselves.)

Some wrote lighter messages to their friends in heaven like, "I hope you're having fun up there" and "Sing a song for me."

Others recalled where they stood or sat or cowered when the shooting began. Some wrote to Ashbrook who killed eight, including himself and wounded seven just six days earlier, Sept. 15, during a See You At the Pole rally.

"Larry Ashbrook, I forgive you," Jeff Nemece wrote.

Another teenager wrote near the spot where Ashbrook committed suicide: "We don't hate you Larry Ashbrook. We hate Satan."

Lisa Jackson wrote to Ashbrook, "I forgive you and through Christ's love toward me I can say that I love you."

The only harsh words were directed to Satan.

"Satan, in the name of my sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, I rebuke you from ever passing through these doors again," wrote Eli G. "This is my Father's House. You have no place here. Amen."

At every entrance, statements like "Satan, bite the dust" and "Satan, you can't stop us" were written. Near the entrance where Ashbrook first entered the building is a drawing of a cross.

The new sense of commitment that many people have expressed was reflected in the writings, such as Aaron Leddy's belief that God protected him so that he could tell others about Christ.

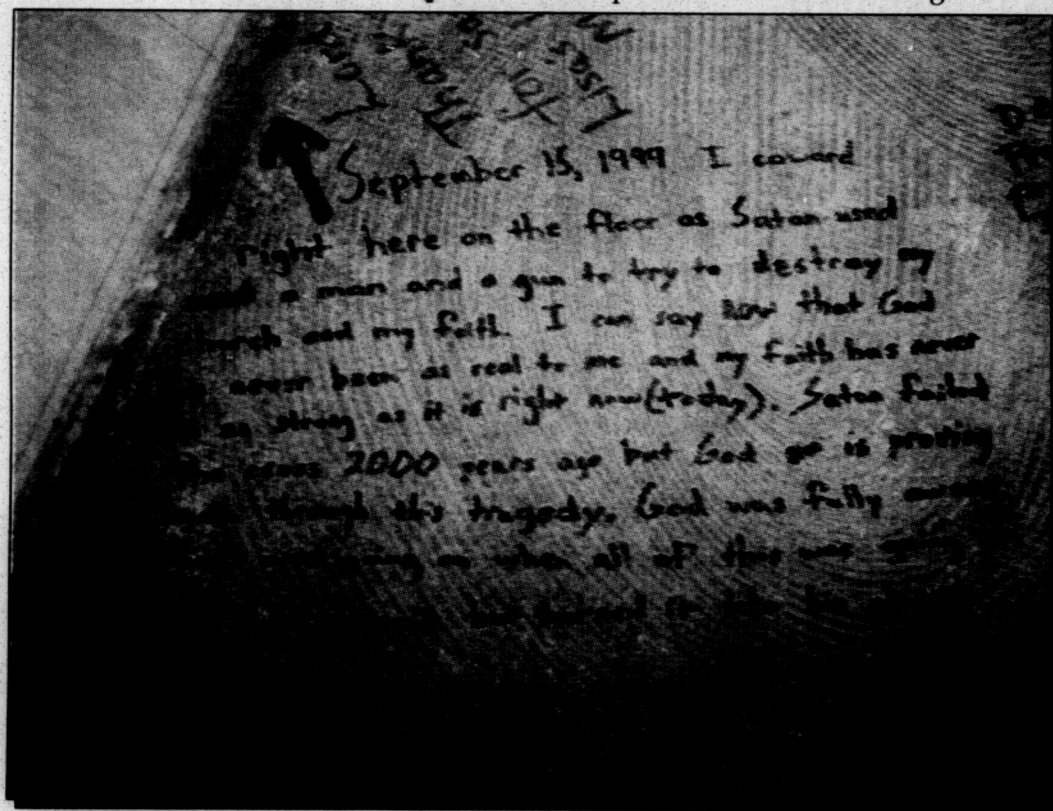
Sarah Hood wrote near an exit, "This is the way that I ran from this sanctuary on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1999. Lord, please don't ever let me have to run from your house again. ... I will be a witness."

Parents, friends, and spouses added to the impromptu memorial, some thanking God for his protection.

"Thank you, Lord, for saving my lovely wife, Nikki," wrote Jay Fannin, Wedgwood's youth minister.

On the foyer floor where Sydney Browning died, a youth wrote, "The Father saw you fall little sparrow, then He flew you home. Make them laugh, Syd. Oh, how I'll miss you. I love you."

The messages will soon be covered when the new carpet is installed, but they, like the memories, will forever be a part of Wedgwood Church.



WORDS OF LOVE — A written note commemorates one youth's recollection of the Wedgwood Baptist Church shooting. Youth and adults who witnessed the shooting spree, as well as others, wrote condolences, memories, and well-wishes on the bare concrete floors of the Wedgwood sanctuary Wednesday, Sept. 21, before crews laid new carpet. (BP photo by Bryan Murley/SWBTS)

Wedgwood shooting heightens security concerns

ATLANTA (BP) — There's a page missing from many churches' manuals on emergency procedures, if they even have such a notebook: what to do when an armed intruder comes in the sanctuary.

What was once unthinkable — entering a place of worship to do physical harm — has occurred several times this year, most recently Sept. 15 when four teens and three adults were killed during a Wednesday night "See You at the Pole" gathering at Wedgwood Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

For David Henderman, director of Atlanta's OSI Network, a Christian company dealing with a variety of security issues, churches' current interest in security is both "a relief and a bit of a bittersweet topic."

"I am so glad that churches are beginning to take a look at their security," said Henderman, a member of First Church, Snellville, Ga., which first looked into developing its own security procedures after receiving a bomb threat a few years ago.

"Planning ahead, the proactive approach to security, is always the best approach," said Henderman, formerly a member of the Atlanta police department, serving as liaison between protection details and the Secret Service. "Waiting to become reactionary to incidents is disaster waiting to happen."

Henderman urges churches to start dealing with security issues by taking a thorough look at their premises.

"The security issues that affect us as Christians spread the entire globe, and they spread everywhere from the crib to the pulpit," said Henderman, who has family members serving as international missionaries, one of

whom was taken hostage after being caught in gunfire.

Because of his personal family experience, "We want to try to do something. This is something that is closer to my heart than just about anything," Henderman said.

"There are so many predators out there and so many things going on. I believe the devil is alive and well and working day and night. I believe if we can get the enemy out of the camp, that sets the stage for revival," he said.



Ron Moore, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

How can I avoid pressuring my children to make the grades I want them to make, rather than allowing them to enjoy their school year?

Identify the strengths of your children. Can they do the work required? Do they have learning disabilities? What is their best? Are they spending a lot of time in the books but simply not grasping the basic details? Most students can do the work but because of distractions, busy schedules, fatigue, or laziness, they choose not to do the work. Discuss their school work with them. Find out what is difficult and, if needed, call their teachers and ask where they see the difficulties. Plan a strategy — the best times to study, how you or tutors can help, how to handle distractions like TV, etc.

Monitor progress and praise them for keeping to the schedule. Remember that you are also tired after a busy day, and take that into consideration as you plan the "family strategy." Staying involved is essential. Staying positive is necessary. Staying prayed up is required!

My ex-wife, who has custody of our two young children, has allowed her new boyfriend to move in with them. How can I best explain to my children that this is wrong?

Your children are caught in a true dilemma — they love both their parents, but can still see the inconsistencies. Every family has paradoxes. Show them the better way by your example. Discuss this situation with your children as it comes up, not to belittle your former

spouse but be the best father you can be. That includes honestly answering their questions. When they mention the boyfriend, ask if it bothers them that he lives in the house. When they ask you why your girlfriend (if you have one) is not living with you, you have an opportunity to talk about dating relationships and the goals that you and your girlfriend have for your relationship. Your former wife is creating real confusion in the social development of the children; by watching adults in compromising situations, such behavior becomes normal to them. Morals are loosened and values are cheapened. Love your children and teach them God's principles so that when they are old enough, they will choose whom they will serve. Be a loving father — no more, no less.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Bibliocipher

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FYB WEODD LUFYBEBFY,
FYB ZSCLBE ZOJBFY: TGF
FYB LCEJ CZ CGE WCJ
DYOSS DFOAJ ZCE BMBE.

UDOUOY FYUEFN-AUAB:

BUWYF

Clue: L = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Four: Eleven.